

Your Honor,

I am writing this letter to attest to the good character and progress of my son, George Pickard who convicted of possession of an unregistered firearm and will be sentenced on January 26, 2023.

George has always been a bright and caring person. We have a close-knit family; he has an older sister and two older brothers. He and two of his siblings attended magnet schools. His older sister was on the Lincoln Douglas Debate team in high school and policy debate team in college. So our every night our family dinners would include debates on topics of politics, economics, philosophy and religion. We encouraged open discourse; all my kids were relatively politically moderate through high school. George started taking college classes at 14 years old and entered Tidewater Community College after he turned 15. He applied to Texas A&M when he was 15. Our intention was to defer the acceptance for one year until he was 16 years old. He was accepted into Texas A&M but was rejected from the Maritime Academy due to his age. He contacted the Commandant of Cadets, and was told that no one under 17 years old had ever made it through the first semester before. The Commandant said he was prohibited by the Code of Federal Regulations that required graduates to be 21 years old at graduation for licensure and commissioning. George researched the CFR and discovered that a 19-year-old could be licensed if they met several conditions, which George felt he could complete by graduation. He contacted the Commandant a second time and was told because he was a transfer, with his TCC credits, he would complete his course work, graduating in 3 years when he was still 18. George agreed to dual major in Marine Transportation and Marine Engineering, which would require 4 years. The Commandant agreed to admit George but stated that he didn't think it was a good idea.

When George entered the Academy when he was 15 years old, the Commandant did not tell the other cadets George's age. His freshman year the Commandant retired, and the new Commandant said he would seek a waiver for George to graduate and be licensed at 18 years old. Soon after graduation George started shipping in the Pacific Ocean. When he returned home, he met a girl who belonged to a right wing group. I was very concerned and researched the group. The group was non-violent; however, I was uncomfortable with their philosophy. I did not have the luxury of dinner time debates to influence him. By the time George was approaching 21 he was starting to soften his political stance. On December 30, 2020, the FBI raided our home, you are familiar with what transpired.

During the last two years George has deradicalized, partly due to his sister and our influences. But mostly he deradicalized from soul searching. George is a very caring person, he has never been in a fight in his life.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Pickard PE